

United States Patent [19]

Cainelli et al.

[11] Patent Number: 4,732,897

[45] Date of Patent: Mar. 22, 1988

[54] STEROIDIC 5 α -REDUCTASE INHIBITORS

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[21] Appl. No.: 825,348

[22] Filed: Feb. 3, 1986

[30] Foreign Application Priority Data

Mar. 7, 1985 [GB] United Kingdom 8505862

[51] Int. Cl.⁴ C07J 73/00; A61K 31/58

[52] U.S. Cl. 514/222; 514/234; 514/236; 514/253; 514/284; 260/397.1; 544/60; 544/125; 544/361; 546/77; 546/78

[58] Field of Search 546/77, 78; 514/284, 514/222, 234, 236, 253; 544/60, 125, 361

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[57]

ABSTRACT

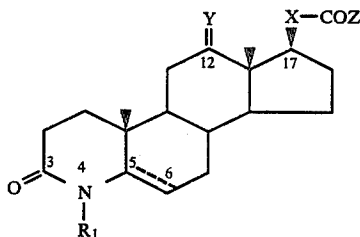
The present invention relates to new 4-aza-17 β -substituted 5 α -androstan-3-ones, to a process for their preparation, to pharmacological compositions containing them, and to the use of said compounds as inhibitors of androgen action by means of testosterone 5-reductase inhibition.

9 Claims, No Drawings

STEROIDIC 5 α -REDUCTASE INHIBITORS

The present invention relates to new 4-aza-17 β -substituted 5 α -androstan-3-ones, to a process for their preparation, to pharmaceutical compositions containing them, and to the use of said compounds as inhibitors of androgen action by means of testosterone 5 α -reductase inhibition. In the androgen responsive tissues the action of testosterone is mediated primarily through its 5 α -reduced metabolite, dihydrotestosterone (DHT) (Bruchowsky N., Wilson J. D.; J. Biol. Chem. 243, 5953, 1968). The conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone is catalyzed by the enzyme 5 α -reductase and if 5 α -reductase is inhibited, the formation of dihydrotestosterone is reduced and its specific androgenic effect is attenuated or prevented.

5 α -reductase inhibitors may find medical application for the treatment of hyperandrogenic conditions, i.e. certain prostatic diseases, such as benign prostatic hypertrophy and prostatic cancer, and certain skin-hair conditions, such as acne, seborrhoea, female hirsutism and male pattern baldness (Siiteri P. K., Wilson J. D., J. Clin. Invest. 49, 1737, 1970; Price V. H., Arch. Dermatol. III, 1496, 1975; Sandberg, A.A., Urology 17, 34, 1981). Also breast cancer treatment can take advantage from use of 5 α -reductase inhibitors as the said tumor is known to be aggravated by presence of androgens. We have found a new group of 4-aza-steroid derivatives with testosterone 5 α -reductase-inhibiting properties. Accordingly the present invention provides novel 4-aza-17 β -substituted androstan-3-one derivatives of the following formula (I)

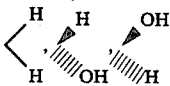


wherein

R₁ is

- (a) hydrogen;
- (b) C₁-C₆ alkyl unsubstituted or substituted by a substituent chosen from carboxy, halogen and amino;
- (c) a C₆-C₁₀ aryl or C₇-C₁₀ aralkyl group, either unsubstituted or ring substituted by one or more substituents chosen from C₁-C₆ alkyl, halogen, nitro, amino and hydroxy, or
- (d) —OR₂ wherein R₂ either has one of the meanings (a), (b) and (c) reported above for R₁; or is a C₂-C₂₂-carboxylic acyl or a hydroxy protecting group;

X is direct bond or a straight or branched C₁-C₆ aliphatic hydrocarbon chain; the symbol =Y represents



or =O;

Z is

- (a') hydroxy;
- (b') C₁-C₆ alkoxy; or
- (c')



wherein each of R₃ and R₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁-C₆ alkyl; or R₃ and R₄, taken together with the nitrogen atom to which they are linked, form a pentatomic or hexatomic heteromonocyclic ring optionally containing an additional heteroatom chosen from N, O and S; and

the symbol \equiv represents a single or a double bond, provided that the symbol =Y does not represent



when R₁ has one of the meanings (a), (b) and (c) reported above.

The invention includes also the pharmaceutically acceptable salts of the compounds of formula (I) as well as all the possible isomers of formula (I) and their mixtures.

In this specification the alkyl groups, including the aliphatic moieties of the aralkyl and alkoxy groups, may be branched or straight chain.

A C₁-C₆ alkyl group is, preferably, C₁-C₄ alkyl, in particular methyl or ethyl; a C₆-C₁₀ aryl group is, preferably, phenyl, α -naphthyl or β -naphthyl, most preferably phenyl. A C₇-C₁₀ aralkyl group is, preferably, benzyl.

A halogen atom is, preferably, chlorine or bromine.

A C₂-C₂₂ carboxylic acyl may be an acyl group derived either from an optionally halosubstituted aliphatic carboxylic acid such as, e.g., acetic or propionic, or halo-acetic, e.g., chloro- or bromo-acetic, acid, or a fatty carboxylic acid such as, e.g., heptanoic, octanoic, dodecanoic, myristic, palmitic or stearic acid; or from an aromatic carboxylic acid such as, e.g., benzoic acid optionally substituted by C₁-C₆ alkyl, e.g. methyl, halogen, e.g. chlorine or bromine, nitro, amino or hydroxy.

A hydroxy protecting group may be any group, preferably an ether group, convertible to hydroxy under mild reaction conditions, e.g. acid hydrolysis. Examples are acetalic ether, enol ether and silyl ether residues, preferred groups being dimethyl tert.butyl silyl, trimethylsilyl and 2-tetrahydropyranyl, most preferably trimethylsilyl and 2-tetrahydropyranyl.

A C₁-C₆ alkoxy group is, preferably, methoxy or ethoxy. When R₁ is a C₁-C₆ alkyl group as defined above under (b), it is, preferably, unsubstituted methyl or ethyl.

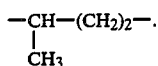
When R₁ is a C₆-C₁₀ aryl or C₇-C₁₀ aralkyl group as defined above under (c), it is, preferably, phenyl or, respectively, benzyl, each unsubstituted or ring substituted by methyl, chlorine, nitro, amino or hydroxy.

When R₁ is —OR₂ as defined above under (d), preferably it is a group —OR₂ wherein R₂ is hydrogen; C₁-C₆

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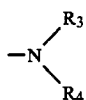
alkyl, in particular methyl or ethyl; a C₂-C₁₂ aliphatic or aromatic carboxylic acyl, in particular the acyl group deriving from acetic, α-bromoacetic, propionic, heptanoic, dodecanoic or benzoic acid; or a hydroxy protecting group, in particular one of those previously specified.

When X is a straight or branched C₁-C₆ aliphatic hydrocarbon chain, it is, preferably, a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain such as, for instance, -CH₂-, -(CH₂)₂-, -(CH₂)₃- or



When Z is C₁-C₆ alkoxy, methoxy and ethoxy are preferred.

When Z is a group



wherein each of R₃ and R₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁-C₆ alkyl, it is, preferably, a group



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl; preferred groups are -NH₂, -NHCH₃, -NHC₂H₅, -N(CH₃)₂ and -N(C₂H₅)₂.

When Z is a group



wherein R₃ and R₄, taken together with the nitrogen atom to which they are linked, form a pentatomic or hexatomic heteromonocyclic ring, this is, preferably, piperidino, piperazino, morpholino or thiomorpholino.

Pharmaceutically acceptable salts of the compounds of the invention are either salts with acids, either inorganic acids, such as, e.g., hydrochloric, sulfuric, phosphoric, hydrobromic or nitric, or organic acids, such as, e.g., acetic, formic, propionic, benzoic, maleic, malic, fumaric, succinic, tartaric, citric, oxalic, methanesulfonic or ethanesulfonic, or salts with bases, either inorganic bases, such as, e.g., sodium, potassium, calcium, aluminium hydroxides and alkali metal or alkaline-earth metal carbonates or bicarbonates, or organic bases, such as, e.g., organic amines or aminoacids, e.g. triethylamine, dibenzylamine, N-benzyl-3-phenethylamine, N,N-dibenzylethylenediamine, N-methylglucamine, tris-hydroxymethylaminomethane, lysine, procaine and the like.

In the formulae of this specification a dotted line indicates a substituent in the α-configuration, i.e. below the plane of the ring; a wedged line indicates a substituent in the β-configuration, i.e. above the plane of the ring.

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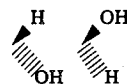
Where stereochemistry is unspecified, it is intended to include all the possible isomers, in particular α- and β-isomers, both separately and in mixture.

A preferred class of compounds according to the invention are the compounds of formula (I) wherein

R₁ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl;

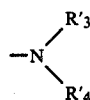
X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain;

the symbol =Y represents



or =O;

Z is hydroxy, C₁-C₆ alkoxy or a group



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl;

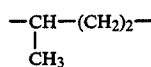
the symbol = represents a single or double bond, the the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

Particularly preferred compounds in the ambit of this class are the compounds of formula (I) wherein R₁ is C₁-C₄ alkyl; X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain; the symbol =Y represents =O; Z is C₁-C₆ alkoxy or a group



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl; and the symbol = represents a single or double bond.

In the above preferred class of compounds, when R₁ is C₁-C₄ alkyl, methyl and ethyl are preferred; when X is a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain, the chain

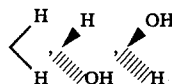


is preferred; preferred values for Z are methoxy, ethoxy, -NH₂, -N(CH₃)₂ and -N(C₂H₅)₂, in particular methoxy, -N(CH₃)₂ and -N(C₂H₅)₂.

Another preferred class of compounds according to the invention are the compounds of formula (I) wherein R₁ is -OR₂ wherein R₂ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄ alkyl or a C₂-C₁₂ aliphatic or aromatic carboxylic acyl or a hydroxy protecting group;

X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain;

the symbol =Y represents



or =O;

Z is hydroxy or a group



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl; and the symbol --- represents a single or double bond, and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

Particularly preferred compounds in the ambit of this second preferred class are the compounds of formula (I) wherein R₁ is —OR₂ wherein R₂ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄ alkyl or a C₂-C₁₂ aliphatic carboxylic acyl group; X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain; the symbol =Y represents

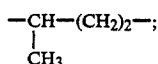


Z is a group



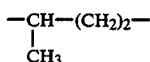
wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl, and the symbol --- represents a single or double bond.

In the ambit of the above preferred class of compounds, preferably R₁ is a group —OR₂ wherein R₂ is hydrogen, methyl or an acyl group chosen from acetyl, propionyl, heptanoyl and dodecanoyl; when X is a straight or branched C₁-C₄ alkylene chain, a preferred chain is



preferred values for Z are —NH₂, —N(CH₃)₂ and —N(C₂H₅)₂, in particular —N(CH₃)₂ and —N(C₂H₅)₂.

In this specification the compounds of formula (I) wherein X is



are referred to as cholane derivatives, more specifically as 4-aza-cholan-3-one-derivatives.

Examples of specific compounds preferred under this invention are:

- 5 (1) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one;
- (2) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one;
- 10 (3) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one;
- (4) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one;
- (5) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one;
- 15 (6) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one;
- (7) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one;
- (8) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one;
- 20 (9) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-ethoxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one;
- (10) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-ethoxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one;
- 25 (11) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;
- (12) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-ethyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;
- (13) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;
- 30 (14) 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-ethyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;
- (15) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-12 α -hydroxy-3-one;
- 35 (16) 17 β -N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-androst-5-en-3-one;
- (17) 17 β -N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-androst-5-en-3-one;
- (18) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one;
- 40 (19) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one;
- (20) 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3,12-dione;
- 45 (21) 24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-chol-5-en-3,12-dione, and
- (22) 24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3,12-dione.

The structural formulae of the above listed compounds, according to their progressive number, are tabulated below with reference to the formula (I)

TABLE

Compound	R ₁	bond	configuration of hydrogen in 5 position	Y	X	Z
1	OH	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{---} \\ \diagup \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	—N(C ₂ H ₅) ₂
2	OH	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{---} \\ \diagup \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	—N(CH ₃) ₂

TABLE-continued

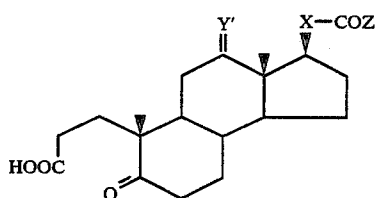
Compound	R ₁	bond	configuration of hydrogen in 5 position	Y	X	Z
3	OH	single	α	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
4	OH	single	β	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
5	OH	single	α	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(CH}_3\text{)}_2$
6	OH	single	β	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(CH}_3\text{)}_2$
7	OCH ₃	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
8	OCH ₃	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(CH}_3\text{)}_2$
9	OC ₂ H ₅	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
10	OC ₂ H ₅	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(CH}_3\text{)}_2$
11	CH ₃	double	—	=O	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
12	C ₂ H ₅	double	—	=O	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
13	CH ₃	double	—	=O	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(CH}_3\text{)}_2$
14	C ₂ H ₅	double	—	=O	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(CH}_3\text{)}_2$
15	CH ₃	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \blacktriangleright \text{H} \\ \text{OH} \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_3 \\ \\ \text{---CH---(CH}_2\text{)}_2\text{---} \end{array}$	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
16	OH	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	bond	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$
17	OCH ₃	double	—	$\begin{array}{c} \text{H} \\ \diagdown \\ \text{H} \end{array}$	bond	$\text{---N(C}_2\text{H}_5\text{)}_2$

TABLE-continued

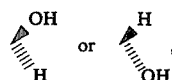
Compound	R ₁	bond	configuration of hydrogen in 5 position	Y	X	Z
18	OCH ₃	single	α			-N(C ₂ H ₅) ₂
19	OCH ₃	single	β			-N(C ₂ H ₅) ₂
20	CH ₃	single	α	=O		-N(C ₂ H ₅) ₂
21	CH ₃	double	—	=O		-OCH ₃
22	CH ₃	single	α	=O		-OCH ₃

The compounds of formula (I) may be prepared by a process comprising

(1) reacting a compound of formula (II)



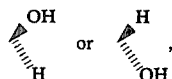
wherein X and Z are as defined above and Y' is =O,



with a compound of formula (III)

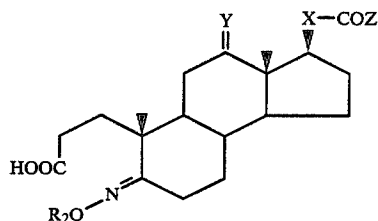


wherein R'₁ has the meaning (a), (b) or (c) reported above for R₁, or a salt thereof, so obtaining a compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is as defined above under (a), (b) or (c), the symbol \equiv represents a double bond, Y is =O



and X and Z are as defined above; or
(2) cyclizing a compound of formula (IV)

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(IV)

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wherein R₂, Y, X and Z are as defined above, so obtaining a compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is a group -OR₂ as defined above under (d), the symbol \equiv represents a double bond, and Y, X and Z are as defined above and, if desired, in any order, hydrogenating a compound of formula (I) wherein the symbol \equiv represents a double bond to obtain a corresponding compound of formula (I) wherein the symbol \equiv represents a single bond and/or, if desired, converting a compound of formula (I) into another compound of formula (I) and/or, if desired, converting a compound of formula (I) into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and/or, if desired, separating a mixture of isomers of formula (I) into the single isomers.

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A salt of a compound of formula (III) may be, for instance, the hydrochloride.

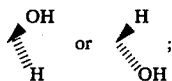
The reaction between a compound of formula (II) and a compound of formula (III) or a salt thereof may be, e.g., carried out in the presence of a base, either organic such as, for instance, pyridine or a tri-C₁-C₆ alkylamine, e.g. triethylamine, or inorganic such as, e.g. sodium or potassium hydroxide, operating in an inert solvent, such as, for example, methanol, ethanol, water, dioxane or diethyleneglycol. The reaction temperature is, preferably, between about 20° C. and about 150° C.

The cyclization of a compound of formula (IV) may be, e.g., performed by heating, for instance at a temperature between about 50° C. and about 150° C., in acetic or formic acid, optionally operating under reductive conditions, for example in the presence of zinc powder.

The optional hydrogenation of a compound of formula (I) wherein the symbol \equiv represents a double bond in order to obtain a corresponding compound of

formula (I) wherein the symbol \equiv represents a single bond may be, e.g., performed by treatment with hydrogen operating at a temperature which may vary from the room temperature to about 140° C. in a suitable solvent, such as, for example, acetic acid, dioxane or N,N-dimethylformamide, and in the presence of a suitable catalyst such as, for instance, platinum dioxide. The said hydrogenation leads to a mixture of 5 α -H and 5 β -H isomers which, if desired, may be separated into the single 5 α -H and 5 β -H compounds by conventional chromatography or fractional crystallization techniques.

Optional conversions of a compound of formula (I) into another compound of formula (I) include, for example, the conversion of a compound of formula (I) wherein Y is \equiv O into a corresponding one wherein Y is

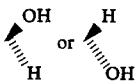


the conversion of a compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is a group OR₂ where R₂ is hydrogen into a corresponding one wherein R₁ is a group OR₂ where R₂ is other than hydrogen; the conversion of a compound of formula (I) wherein Z is hydroxy into a corresponding one wherein Z is C₁-C₆ alkoxy or a group



wherein R₃ and R₄ are as defined above; and also the conversion of a compound of formula (I) wherein the symbol \equiv represents a single bond into a corresponding one wherein the said symbol represents a double bond.

The above said possible conversions may be carried out by known methods following conventional procedures. Thus, for example, a compound of formula (I) wherein Y is \equiv O may be transformed into a corresponding compound wherein Y is



or hydrogenation in a suitable solvent at a suitable temperature in the presence of a conventional catalyst which may be, for instance, platinum dioxide: a possibly obtained mixture of epimeric α - and β -alcohols may be separated by fractional crystallization or chromatography.

The transformation of a compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is OR₂ where R₂ is hydrogen into a corresponding compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is a group —OR₂ wherein R₂ is a C₁-C₆ alkyl or C₆-C₁₀ aryl or C₇-C₁₀ aralkyl group as defined above for R₁ under (b) and (c), or a C₂-C₂₂ carboxylic acyl, may be carried out, e.g., by reaction with a compound of formula (V)



wherein Hal is halogen, in particular bromine or chlorine, and R'₂ is a C₁-C₆ alkyl or C₆-C₁₀ aryl or C₇-C₁₀

aralkyl group as defined for R₁ under (b) and (c) or a C₂-C₂₂ carboxylic acyl.

Preferably the reaction is carried out in the presence of a basic agent which may be, for instance, an organic base such as, e.g., pyridine or triethylamine, operating at a temperature which may vary from the room temperature to about 100° C.

Alternatively a compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is a group —OR₂ where R₂ is C₁-C₆ alkyl may also be obtained from the corresponding compound where R₁ is a group —OR₂ wherein R₂ is hydrogen by alkylation with a suitable diazoalkane: in this instance diethyl ether is preferably used as solvent at room temperature.

As an alternative approach too, a compound of formula (I) where R₁ is a group —OR₂ wherein R₂ is a C₂-C₂₂ carboxylic acyl may also be obtained from the corresponding compound where R₁ is —OR₂ wherein R₂ is hydrogen, by reaction with the desired C₂-C₂₂ carboxylic acid or a reactive derivative thereof such as the anhydride.

The optional conversion of a compound of formula (I) wherein R₁ is a group —OR₂ where R₂ is hydrogen into a corresponding one wherein R₁ is a group —OR₂ where R₂ is a hydroxy protecting group, e.g. of the kind previously specified, may be performed by methods known per se, according to standard etherification procedures.

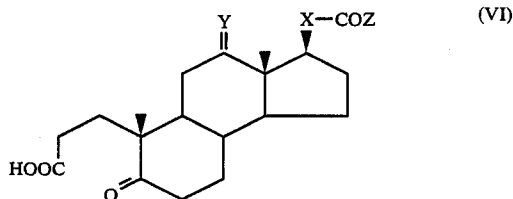
The optional transformation of a compound of formula (I) wherein Z is hydroxy into a corresponding one wherein Z is C₁-C₆ alkoxy or a group



may be performed by conventional esterification or amidation reactions, and known methods may also be followed for converting a compound of formula (I) wherein the symbol \equiv represents a single bond into a corresponding one wherein the symbol \equiv represents a double bond.

Standard procedures may be used as well for converting a compound of formula (I) into a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof and conventional methods such as, e.g., fractional crystallization or chromatography, may be employed for separating a mixture of isomers of formula (I) into the single isomers.

The compounds of formula (II) are known compounds or may be prepared by known methods from known compounds. The compounds of formula (IV) may be prepared reacting a compound of formula (VI)



wherein Y, X and Z are as defined above, with a compound of formula (VII)



wherein R₂ is as defined above, or a salt thereof, which may be, for instance, the hydrochloride. The reaction may be performed under conditions similar to those reported before for the analogous reaction between a compound of formula (II) and a compound of formula (III).

The compounds having the formulae (III), (V), (VI) and (VII) are known compounds or may be prepared by known methods from known compounds.

If required, any reactive functional group possibly present in any of the compounds involved in the above described reactions, may be conventionally protected before the reaction and then removed, in a conventional way too, at the end of the reaction itself.

As already said, the compounds of the invention are potent antiandrogens because of their ability to inhibit testosterone 5 α -reductase. Thus, for example, the inhibitory effect of the compounds of the invention on 5 α -reductase was determined *in vitro* in comparison with progesterone taken as the reference compound, according to the procedure reported herebelow.

Bioassay of 5 α -reductase inhibitors

5 α -reductase activity was evaluated using a combined mixture of nuclear, microsomal and mitochondrial fractions (particulate fraction) from rat ventral prostate homogenates as the enzyme source. The particulate fraction was prepared centrifuging prostate homogenate at 140,000 \times g. The resulting pellet, washed several times, was resuspended in buffer and stored at -80° C. in aliquots containing 50 mg protein/ml.

The assay for 5 α -reductase was done in a final volume of 0.5 ml containing 1 mM dithiothreitol, 40 mM sodium phosphate pH 6.5, 0.5 mM NADPH, 1 μ M [¹⁴C]-testosterone and 1 mg of prostate particulate fraction. The reaction mixture, after 30 min. incubation at 37° C., with or without the inhibitory compound, was extracted with ethyl acetate. The residue of the organic phase, resuspended in ethyl acetate, was chromatographed on silica gel plate using chloroform, acetone and n-hexane (2:1:2) as developing solvent system.

The t.l.c. plates were scanned for radioactivity and the area of unreacted testosterone and of 5 α -reduced metabolites (5 α -dihydrotestosterone, 3 α - and 3 β -diols) were measured. The concentrations of each compound that gave 50% inhibition (IC₅₀) of 5 α -reductase was calculated. As reference compound progesterone was used and the potency of each compound was compared to progesterone (potency=1 by definition) using the formula

$$\text{relative potency} = \frac{\text{IC}_{50} \text{ for progesterone}}{\text{IC}_{50} \text{ for the test compound}}$$

The following table summarizes the results in activity obtained for the compounds of the invention identified by the numbers 1, 3, 4, 11, 15, 16 and 20 hereinbefore, in comparison with the reference compound progesterone:

Compound	Relative potency
Progesterone	1
compound 1	43
compound 3	32
compound 4	13
compound 11	16

-continued

Compound	Relative potency
compound 15	13
compound 16	10
compound 20	32

It is evident from the reported data that the compounds of the invention are more potent 5 α -reductase inhibitors than the reference compound. In view of the above indicated activity the compounds of the invention are therapeutically useful in the situations in which a decrease in androgen action, by means of 5 α -reductase inhibition, is desirable such as, for example, benign prostatic hypertrophy, prostatic and breast cancers and certain skin-hair conditions such as, e.g., acne, seborrhoea, female hirsutism and male pattern baldness. The toxicity of the compounds of the invention is quite negligible so that they can be safely used in therapy.

The compounds of the invention can be administered in a variety of dosage forms, e.g. orally, in the form of tablets, capsules, sugar or film coated tablets, liquid solutions or suspensions; rectally, in the form of suppositories; parenterally, e.g. intramuscularly, or by intravenous injection or infusion; topically, e.g. in the form of creams. The dosage depends on the age, weight, conditions of the patient and administration route; for example the dosage adopted for oral administration to adult humans may range from about 20 to about 400 mg pro dose, from 1 to 5 times daily.

As already said the invention includes pharmaceutical compositions comprising a compound of the invention in association with a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient (which can be a carrier or diluent).

The pharmaceutical compositions containing the compounds of the invention are usually prepared following conventional methods and are administered in a pharmaceutically suitable form. For example, the solid oral forms may contain, together with the active compound, diluents, e.g., lactose, dextrose, saccharose, cellulose, corn starch or potato starch; lubricants, e.g. silica, talc, stearic acid, magnesium or calcium stearate, and/or polyethylene glycols; binding agents, e.g. starches, arabic gums, gelatin, methylcellulose, carboxymethylcellulose or polyvinyl pyrrolidone; disaggregating agents, e.g. a starch, alginic acid, alginates or sodium starch glycolate; effervescent mixtures; dye-stuffs; sweeteners; wetting agents, such as lecithin, polysorbates, laurylsulphates; and, in general, non-toxic and pharmacologically inactive substances used in pharmaceutical formulations. Said pharmaceutical preparations may be manufactured in known manner, for example, by means of mixing, granulating, tableting, sugar-coating, or film-coating processes.

The liquid dispersions for oral administration may be, e.g. syrups, emulsions and suspensions. The syrups may contain as carrier, for example, saccharose or saccharose with glycerine and/or mannitol and/or sorbitol; in particular a syrup to be administered to diabetic patients can contain as carriers only products not metabolizable to glucose, or metabolizable in very small amount to glucose, for example sorbitol.

The suspensions and the emulsions may contain as carrier, for example, a natural gum, agar, sodium alginate, pectin, methylcellulose, carboxymethylcellulose, or polyvinyl alcohol. The suspensions or solutions for intramuscular injections may contain, together with the active compound, a pharmaceutically acceptable car-

rier, e.g. sterile water, olive oil, ethyl oleate, glycols, e.g. propylene glycol, and if desired, a suitable amount of lidocaine hydrochloride.

The solutions for intravenous injections or infusions may contain as carrier, for example, sterile water or, preferably, they may be in the form of sterile, aqueous, isotonic saline solutions.

The suppositories may contain together with the active compound a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, e.g. cocoa-butter, polyethylene glycol, a polyoxyethylene sorbitan fatty acid ester surfactant or lecithin. Conventional carriers may be used for topical formulations. The following examples illustrate but do not limit the invention.

The abbreviations DMF, t.l.c. and AcOH stand, respectively, for dimethylformamide, thin layer chromatography, and acetic acid.

The reported NMR data were determined in CDCl_3 .

EXAMPLE 1

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5 β -cholan-3-one

To a solution of 3-oxo-5 β -cholan-24-oic acid [Burckhardt, T. Reichstein, *Helv. Chim. Acta* 25, 1434 (1942)] (16 g, 0.043 mol) in anhydrous benzene (250 ml), anhydrous pyridine (4.35 ml, 0.054 mol), followed by a solution of oxalyl chloride (4.7 ml, 0.054 mol) in benzene (10 ml), were added dropwise. After stirring at room temperature for 1 hour, the solution was cooled to 10° C. and the pH adjusted to persistent alkaline by slowly adding a 1/1 solution of N,N-diethylamine in benzene. The resulting solution was stirred for 30 minutes, poured into ice-water and extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic layers were washed with dilute HCl and dried. The solvent was removed in vacuo, obtaining an amorphous solid, which was recrystallized from ligroin to yield the title compound (14 g), m.p. 113°–114° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $\text{C}_{28}\text{H}_{47}\text{NO}_2$: C 78.27; H 11.03; N 3.26; found: C 78.39; H 11.01; N 3.25; m/z 429 (M^+), 414, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 1715, 1650 cm^{-1} ;

^1H NMR: 3.35 (m, 4H, $\text{N}(\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3)_2$);

^{13}C NMR: 213.1 (C-3), 172.6 (C-24), 42.0–40.1 (N— CH_2 —), 22.7 (C-19), 18.5 (C-21), 14.5–13.1 (N— CH_2 — CH_3)₂, 12.1 (C-18).

By analogous procedure, 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-5 β -cholan-3-one was obtained.

EXAMPLE 2

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-chol-4-en-3-one

To a well stirred solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5 β -cholan-3-one (16.4 g, 0.038 mol) in chloroform (200 ml), a solution of bromine (2.2 ml, 0.043 mol) in the same solvent (10 ml) was added dropwise at room temperature and the stirring was continued until colourless solution. At this time the solvent was stripped off, the residue was dissolved in DMF (150 ml) and LiCl (16.2 g, 0.38 mol) was added. The resulting mixture was heated at 110° C. with stirring overnight. The reaction mixture was poured into ice-water, acidified with diluted HCl, extracted with ethyl acetate and dried. The solvent was removed in vacuo and the residue chromatographed at medium pressure eluting with ethyl acetate n-hexane 1/1, obtaining the title compound as crystalline solid (7.5 g), m.p. 113°–115° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $\text{C}_{28}\text{H}_{45}\text{NO}_2$: C 78.64; H 10.61; N 3.28; Found: C 78.50; H 10.60; N 3.27;

m/z 427 (M^+), 412, 313, 271, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 1675, 1650 cm^{-1} ;

^1H NMR: 5.75 (s, 1H), 3.35 (m, 4H, N— CH_2 —);

^{13}C NMR: 199.4 (C-3), 172.6 (C-24), 171.5 (C-5), 123.8 (C-4), 42.0–40.0 (N—C), 18.5 (C-21), 17.4 (C-19), 14.5–13.1 (N— CH_2 —C), 12.0 (C-18).

By analogous procedure 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-chol-4-en-3-one was obtained.

EXAMPLE 3

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-oxo-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid

To a stirred solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-chol-4-en-3-one (2 g, 0.0047 mol) in tert.butyl alcohol (52 ml) containing sodium carbonate (0.74 g, 0.007 mmol, dissolved in 3.5 ml of water), a solution of sodium periodate (6.95 g, 0.032 mol) in water (52 ml) and a solution of potassium permanganate (3.9 ml of 2% aqueous solution) were added dropwise simultaneously at a temperature between 25° and 40° C. and at a rate sufficient to keep the solution light pink. The solution was stirred for 2 hours, filtered and the filtrate was concentrated to small volume in order to eliminate the tert.butyl alcohol. The resulting residue was acidified at 0° C. with H_2SO_4 (50% aqueous solution) and extracted with ethyl acetate. The organic layers were washed with potassium hydrogen sulfate, dried (Na_2SO_4) and the solvent removed in vacuo. The residue was chromatographed (ethyl acetate as eluant) to give the title compound (1.2 g), m.p. 152°–155° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{45}\text{NO}_4$: C 72.44; H 10.13; N 3.13; Found: C 72.54; H 10.11; N 3.12; m/z 447 (M^+), 382, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 3200, 1730, 1695 cm^{-1} ;

^1H NMR: 9.1 (bs, 1H), 3.35 (m, 4H, N— $(\text{CH}_2)_2$).

By analogous procedure 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-5-oxo-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid was obtained.

EXAMPLE 4

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-5-hydroxy-imino-3-oic acid

To a solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-oxo-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid (3 g, 0.0067 mol) in ethanol (90 ml of 95% solvent), potassium hydroxide (60 ml of a 5% aqueous solution) and hydroxylamine hydrochloride (0.9 g, 0.0129 mol) were added. After refluxing for 2 hours, the volume was concentrated to a half and the solution was acidified with acetic acid. The reaction mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate, dried, the solvent removed in vacuo and the residue crystallized from ethyl acetate to give the title compound (2.15 g), m.p. 163°–165° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $\text{C}_{27}\text{H}_{46}\text{N}_2\text{O}_4$: C 70.09; H 10.02; N 6.05; Found: C 70.18; H 10.01; N 6.06; m/z 462 (M^+), 444, 427;

I.R. (nujol): 3420, 3200, 1745, 1705, 1595, 930 cm^{-1} ;

^1H NMR: 8.45 (bs, 1H), 3.35 (m, 4H, N— $(\text{CH}_2)_2$);

^{13}C NMR: 178.4 (C-3), 173.3 (C-24), 164.0 (C-5), 22.0 (C-19), 18.5 (C-21), 14.4–13.1 (N— $(\text{CH}_2)_2$), 12.0 (C-18).

By analogous procedure 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-5-hydroxy-imino-3-oic acid was prepared.

EXAMPLE 5

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one
(compound 1)

To a solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-5-hydroxyimino-3-oic acid (1.55 g, 0.0033 mol) in acetic acid (44 ml), powdered Zn (2.4 g, 0.036 mol) was added portionwise. The mixture was stirred vigorously heating at 90°-95° C. for 1 hour. The suspension was filtered off. The filtrate was diluted with water to give a white solid which was filtered, dried in dry-seal desiccator, and purified by a column chromatography (ethyl acetate/methanol 98/2 as eluant). The product was recrystallized from methanol to yield the title compound (0.73 g), m.p. 215°-218° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{27}H_{44}N_2O_3$: C 72.93; H 9.97; N 6.30; Found: C 73.06; H 9.99; N 6.29; m/z 444 (M^+), 427, 330, 314, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 1650 cm^{-1} ;

1H NMR: 5.52 (s, 1H), 3.35 (m, 4H);

^{13}C NMR: 172.7 (C-24), 161.7 (C-3), 139.0 (C-5), 104.0 (C-6), 42.1-40.1 (N-(C)₂), 19.0 (C-19), 18.6 (C-21), 14.5-13.1 (N-(CH₂-C)₂), 12.0 (C-18).

By analogous procedure 24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one (compound 2) was prepared.

EXAMPLE 6

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one
(compound 3) and

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one
(compound 4)

A solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one (1 g, 0.0022 mol) in acetic acid (56 ml) was hydrogenated for 5 hours over PtO₂ (0.25 g, 0.0011 mol) at H₂ pressure of 40 psi. After filtration to remove catalyst, the reaction mixture was concentrated under high vacuum and the residue crystallized from benzene/petroleum ether. A t.l.c. of the solid showed two spots. Separation of the corresponding compounds by preparative t.l.c. gave the 5 β -isomer (compound 4) (0.4 g), m.p. 125°-128° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{27}H_{46}N_2O_3$: C 72.60; H 10.38; N 6.27; Found: C 72.49; H 10.39; N 6.26; m/z 446 (M^+), 431, 322, 316, 302, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 1640 cm^{-1} ;

^{13}C NMR: 172.7 (C-24), 164.7 (C-3), 21.3 (C-19), 18.6 (C-21), 14.5-13.1 (N-(CH₂-C)₂), 12.0 (C-18).

From the mother liquor after standing overnight, a new solid was obtained. This product was identified as the 5 α -isomer (compound 3), (0.2 g), m.p. 228°-230° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{27}H_{46}N_2O_3$: C 72.60; H 10.38; N 6.27; Found: C 72.73; H 10.40; N 6.28; m/z 446 (M^+), 431, 322, 316, 302, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 1640 cm^{-1} ;

1NMR : 8.05 (bs, 1H), 3.5 (m, 4H);

^{13}C NMR: 172.7 (C-24), 165.5 (C-3), 18.5 (C-21), 14.5-13.1 (N-(CH₂-C)₂), 12.5 (C-19), 12.0 (C-18).

By analogous procedure the following compounds were obtained:

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one (compound 5);

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one (compound 6);

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one (compound 18), m.p. 180°-182° C.;

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one (compound 19), m.p. 108°-110° C.;

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3,12-dione (compound 20);

24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3,12-dione (compound 22), m.p. 132°-133° C.

EXAMPLE 7

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one (compound 18)

To a suspension of KH (0.2 g, 20% suspension in paraffin) in anhydrous tetrahydrofuran (15 ml) a solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3-one (0.2 g, 0.45 mmol) was added. The solution was heated at 40° C. then a solution of methyl iodide (0.2 ml) in tetrahydrofuran (10 ml) was added thereto. After stirring 20 minutes at 50° C., the reaction mixture was cooled to 0° C., acidified with diluted (1:1) aqueous hydrochloric acid and extracted with ethylacetate; the organic layers were washed with brine, dried over Na₂SO₄, and the solvent removed in vacuo. The residue was chromatographed (ethyl acetate/CH₃OH 97/3 as eluant) to give the title compound in quantitative yield, m.p. 180°-182° C.

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{28}H_{48}N_2O_3$: C 73.00; H 10.5; N 6.08; Found: C 73.09; H 10.48; N 6.07; m/z 460 (M^+), 445, 429, 346, 333, 316, 300;

I.R. (nujol): 1700, 1635 cm^{-1} ;

1H NMR: 3.75 (s, 3H); 3.35 (m, 5H);

^{13}C NMR: 172.6 (C-24); 168.6 (C-3); 62.8 (O-CH₃); 18.6 (C-21); 14.4-13.3 (N-CH₂-C)₂; 12.6 (C-19); 12.3 (C-18).

By analogous procedure there was obtained 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-5 β -cholan-3-one (compound 19), m.p. 108°-110° C.;

m/z 460 (M^+), 445, 429, 346, 333, 316.

I.R. (nujol): 1660; 1635 cm^{-1} ;

1H NMR: 3.75 (s, 3H); 3.35 (m, 5H);

^{13}C NMR: 172.6 (C-24), 168.1 (C-3), 61.3 (OCH₃), 18.6 (C-21), 14.3-13.3 (CH₂-CHd 3), 12.1 (C-18).

EXAMPLE 8

24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione

(compound 21)

A solution of 5,12-dioxo-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-carboxy-24-oic acid (3 g, 0.0074 mol) in anhydrous ethanol (20 ml) saturated with N-methylamine, was heated in sealed tube at 125° C. overnight. The solvent was removed, methanol (100 ml) and BF₃ etherate were added. The resulting solution was refluxed for 3 hours, cooled to 10° C., decomposed with ice-water and extracted with chloroform. The organic layers were washed with water, brine, dried and the solvent removed in vacuo. Chromatography of the resulting residue (ethylacetate as eluant), gave the title compound (1.3 g, 42%), m.p. 136°-138° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{25}H_{37}NO_4$: C 72.26; H 8.97; N 3.37; Found: C 72.13; H 8.97; N 3.38; m/z 415 (M^+), 400, 258;

I.R. (nujol): 1750, 1710, 1680, 1635 cm^{-1} ;

¹H NMR: 5.15 (m, 1H); 3.7 (s, 3H); 3.15 (s, 3H);
¹³C NMR: 213.3 (C-12); 174.4 (C-24); 168.0 (C-3);
 144.3 (C-5); 104.0 (C-6); 51.3 (O-CH₃); 18.6 (C-22); 18.6
 (C-19); 11.8 (C-18).

EXAMPLE 9

24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5 α -cholan-3,12-
 dione

(compound 22)

A solution of 24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-
 chol-5-en-3,12 dione (0.5 g) in acetic acid (50 ml), was
 hydrogenated for 5 hours over PtO₂ (0.25 g) (pH₂ 40
 psi). After filtration to remove the catalyst, the reaction
 mixture was concentrated under high vacuum and the
 residue dissolved in ethyl acetate and chromatog-
 15 graphed. The 5 α isomer was oxidated by Johnson pro-
 cedure [J.A.C.S. 73, 5464, (1951)] to give, after chroma-
 tography, the title compound (0.2 g, 40%), m.p.
 132°-133° C.

Elemental analysis: Calculated for C₂₅H₃₉NO₄: C
 71.9; H 9.41; N 3.35; Found: C 72.01; H 9.4; N 3.35;
 m/z 417 (M⁺), 262

I.R. (nujol): 1735, 1710, 1650 cm⁻¹;

¹H NMR: 3.7 (s, 3H); 3.00 (s, 3H);

¹³C NMR: 213.4 (C-12); 174.5 (C-24); 170.5 (C-3);
 51.4 (OCH₃); 18.7 (C-21); 12.1 (C-9); 11.8 (C-18).

EXAMPLE 10

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-azachol-5-en-
 3-one

(compound 7)

To an ethereal suspension of 24-N,N-diethylcarbam-
 oyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one (1 g, 0.0026 mol), a
 solution of diazomethane in diethyl ether was added
 dropwise at 0° C., monitoring by t.l.c., until the starting
 material disappeared. At this time few drops of AcOH
 were added, the solvent was stripped off and the residue
 chromatographed on silica gel eluting with ethyl acetate/
 methanol 97/3 to obtain a solid, which was crystal-
 40 lized from methanol-water to give the title compound
 (0.6 g), m.p. 154°-156° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for C₂₈H₄₆N₂O₃: C
 73.32; H 10.11; N 6.11 Found: C 73.44; H 10.10; N 6.10;
 m/z 458 (M⁺), 428, 314, 156;

¹H NMR: 5.45 (m, 1H), 3.70 (s, 3H), 3.35 (m, 4H);

¹³C NMR: 172.3 (C-24), 162.8 (C-3), 139.0 (C-5),
 102.1 (C-6), 41.7-39.8 (N-(C)₂), 35.4 (O-CH₃), 18.6
 (C-19), 18.3 (C-21), 14.2-12.9 (N-(CH₂-C)₂), 11.7 (C-18).

By analogous procedure the following compounds
 were obtained:

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-azachol-5-en-
 3-one (compound 8);

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-ethoxy-4-azachol-5-en-
 3-one (compound 9);

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-ethoxy-4-azachol-5-en-
 3-one (compound 10).

EXAMPLE 11

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-
 3,12-dione

(compound 11)

A solution of 5,12-dioxo-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-car-
 boxy-24-oic acid (3 g, 0.0074 mol) in anhydrous ethanol
 (33 ml) saturated with N-methylamine, was heated in
 sealed tube at 125° C. overnight. The solvent was re-
 moved and pyridine (0.76 ml, 0.0094 mol) in CHCl₃ (70

ml) was added. To this well stirred solution, oxalyl
 chloride (0.81 ml, 0.0094 mol) in CHCl₃ (8 ml) was
 added dropwise. The resulting solution was stirred for 1
 hour at room temperature, cooled to 10° C. and the pH
 5 adjusted to persistent alkaline by adding N,N-diethyl
 amine in CHCl₃. The mixture was stirred for further 30
 minutes, decomposed with ice-water and extracted with
 chloroform. The organic layers were washed with wa-
 ter, brine, dried and the solvent removed in vacuo.
 10 Chromatography of the resulting residue, with ethyl
 acetate as eluant, and crystallization from ethyl acetate
 gave the title compound (2 g), m.p. 196°-199° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for C₂₈H₄₄N₂O₃: C
 73.64; H 9.71; N 6.13; Found: C 73.53; H 9.69; N 6.18;
 m/z 456 (M⁺), 441, 342, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 1710, 1675, 1645 cm⁻¹;

¹H NMR: 5.15 (m, 1H), 3.35 (m, 4H), 3.15 (s, 3H);

¹³C NMR: 213.9 (C-12), 172.5 (C-24), 168.0 (C-3),
 143.9 (C-5), 104.3 (C-6), 42.0-40.1 (N-(CC)₂), 31.0 (N-
 CH₃), 18.8 (C-19), 18.5 (C-21), 14.4-13.1 (N-(CH₂-C)₂),
 11.8 (C-18).

By analogous procedure the following compounds
 were prepared:

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-ethyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-
 dione (compound 12);

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-
 3,12-dione (compound 13);

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-ethyl-4-azachol-5-en-
 3,12-dione (compound 14).

EXAMPLE 12

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-
 12 α -hydroxy-3-one (compound 15)

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-
 3,12-dione (1.35 g, 0.00296 mol) was dissolved in acetic
 acid (100 ml) and hydrogenated using Parr apparatus (at
 the H₂ pressure of 40 psi) for 12 hours using PtO₂ (0.25
 g, 0.0011 mol) as catalyst. The catalyst was removed by
 40 filtration, the filtrate was diluted with chloroform, neu-
 tralized with NaHCO₃ (10% aqueous solution) and
 extracted with chloroform. The organic layers were
 washed with water, brine, dried, and the solvent re-
 moved in vacuo. Separation with column chromatog-
 raphy (ethyl acetate/methanol as eluant) followed by
 crystallization from n-hexane-ethyl acetate gave the
 title compound (0.4 g), m.p. 166°-170° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for C₂₈H₄₆N₂O₃: C
 73.32; H 10.11; N 6.11; Found: C 73.23; H 10.09; N 6.13;
 m/z 458 (M⁺), 440, 425, 344, 307, 156;

I.R. (nujol): 3420, 1675, 1650, 1620 cm⁻¹;

¹H NMR: 5.1 (m, 1H), 4.1 (bt, 1H), 3.35 (m, 4H), 3.15
 (s, 3H);

¹³C NMR: 172.6 (C-24), 168.4 (C-3), 144.2 (C-5),
 104.7 (C-6); 72.9 (C-12), 18.7 (C-19), 17.7 (C-21),
 14.5-13.1 (N-(CH₂-C)₂), 12.8 (C-18).

EXAMPLE 13

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-methoxyimino-3,5-seco-4-
 nor-cholan-3-oic acid

To a solution of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-oxo-3,5-
 seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid (0.5 g, 0.0011 mol) in pyri-
 dine (5 ml), methoxyamine hydrochloride (0.12 g,
 0.0014 mol) was added. After being stirred at room
 temperature overnight, the solution was decomposed
 with water, acidified with diluted HCl, and extracted
 with chloroform. Usual work-up, followed by purifica-

tion with column chromatography (ethyl acetate/n-hexane 7/3 as eluant) and crystallization from ethyl acetate yielded the title compound (0.45 g), m.p. 158°-159° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{28}H_{48}N_2O_4$: C 70.55; H 10.15; N 5.88; Found: C 70.47; H 10.16; N 5.92; m/z 476 (M⁺), 445, 417, 404, 362, 156; I.R. (nujol): 3300, 1730, 1620 cm^{-1} ;

¹H NMR: 9.0 (bs, 1H), 3.8 (s, 3H), 3.35 (m, 4H).

By analogous procedure the following compounds were obtained:

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-ethoxyimino-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid;

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-5-methoxyimino-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid;

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-5-ethoxyimino-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid.

EXAMPLE 14

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one

(compound 7)

Refluxing of 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-methoxyimino-3,5-seco-4-nor-cholan-3-oic acid in acetic acid for 8 hours gave with 30% yield the title compound, which resulted identical in all respects to the product obtained in example 10. By analogous procedure also the compounds 8, 9 and 10 were prepared.

EXAMPLE 15

17β-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-3,5-seco-4-nor-androstan-5-hydroxyimino-3-oic acid

To a solution of 17β-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-5-oxo-3,5-seco-4-nor-androstan-3-oic acid (3 g, 0.0076 mol) in ethanol (95%), was added KOH (70 mol of 5% aqueous solution) followed by hydroxylamine hydrochloride (1.05 g, 0.015 mol). The solution was refluxed for 3 hours. After acidification with acetic acid a white precipitate was obtained. Recrystallization from MeOH gave the title compound (2.1 g), m.p. 223°-225° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{23}H_{38}N_2O_4$: C 67.95; H 9.42; N 6.89; Found: C 68.05; H 9.41; N 6.88; m/z 406 (M⁺), 389, 388, 372, 357, 176;

I.R. (nujol): 3400, 3200, 1750, 1590 cm^{-1} ;

¹H NMR: 7.0 (m, 2H), 3.7 (m, 2H), 3.15 (m, 2H).

By analogous procedure, 17β-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-3,5-seco-4-nor-androstan-5-methoxyimino-3-oic acid was prepared.

EXAMPLE 16

17β-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-androst-5-en-3-one

(compound 16)

A solution of 17β-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-3,5-seco-4-nor-androstan-5-hydroxyimino-3-oic acid (4.06 g, 0.01 mol) in acetic acid was refluxed for 4 hours. The reaction mixture was poured into ice-water, neutralized with NaHCO₃ and extracted with diethyl ether. The solvent was stripped off and a white solid was obtained. Recrystallization of the residue from ethyl acetate gave the title compound (2.83 g), m.p. 194°-198° C.;

Elemental analysis: Calculated for $C_{23}H_{36}N_2O_3$: C 71.1; H 9.34; N 7.21; Found: C 70.98; H 9.33; N 7.26; m/z 388 (M⁺), 371, 357;

I.R. (nujol): 3150, 1640 cm^{-1} ;

¹H NMR: 8.0 (bs, 1H), 5.55 (m, 1H), 3.7 (m, 2H), 3.15 (m, 2H), 2.6 (m, 3H);

¹³C NMR: 172.2 (C-17), 161.3 (C-3), 138.5 (C-5), 103.9 (C-6), 19.0 (C-19), 14.7-14.1 (N-(CH₂)₂), 14.0 (C-18).

By analogous procedure, 17β-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methoxy-4-aza-androst-5-en-3-one (compound 17) was prepared.

EXAMPLE 17

Scored tablets for oral use, each containing 250 mg of the active substance, were manufactured as follows:

Composition (for 10,000 tablets)	
24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-azachol-5-en-3-one	2500 g
corn starch	275 g
talc powder	187 g
calcium stearate	38 g

The active substance was granulated with a 4% w/v aqueous solution of methyl cellulose. To the dried granules a mixture of the remainder of the ingredients is added and the final mixture compressed into tablets of proper weight.

EXAMPLE 18

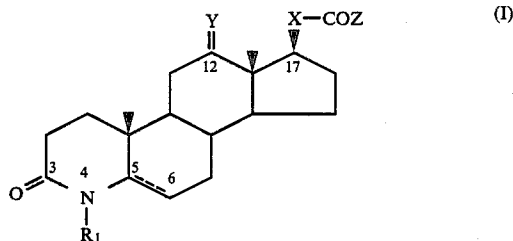
Two-piece hard gelatin capsules for oral use, each containing 250 mg of active substance were manufactured as follows.

Composition for 10,000 capsules	
24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-hydroxy-4-aza-5α-cholan-3-one	2500 g
lactose	1000 g
corn starch	300 g
talc powder	65 g
calcium stearate	35 g

The active substance was mixed with the starch-lactose mixture followed by the talc and calcium stearate. The final mixture was encapsulated in the conventional manner.

We claim:

1. A compound of the following formula (I)



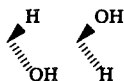
wherein

R₁ is

- (a) hydrogen;
- (b) C₁-C₆ alkyl unsubstituted or substituted by a substituent chosen from carboxy, halogen and amino;
- (c) a phenyl, α-naphthyl, β-naphthyl or benzyl group, either unsubstituted or ring substituted by a substituent chosen from C₁-C₆ alkyl, halogen, nitro, amino and hydroxy, or

(d) —OR₂ wherein R₂ either has one of the meanings (a), (b) and (c) reported above for R₁; or is a C₂–C₁₂-aliphatic or aromatic carboxylic acyl or a hydroxy protecting group chosen from the group consisting of dimethyltert butyl silyl, trimethylsilyl, and 2-tetrahydropyranyl;

X is direct bond or a straight or branched C₁–C₆-aliphatic hydrocarbon chain;
the symbol =Y represents



or =O;

Z is

- (a') hydroxy;
- (b') C₁–C₆ alkoxy; or
- (c')



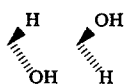
wherein each of R₃ and R₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁–C₆ alkyl; or R₃ and R₄ taken together with the nitrogen atom to which they are linked, from a hexatomic heteromonocyclic ring chosen from piperidino, piperazino, morpholino and thiomorpholino;

the symbol = represents a single or double bond, and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

2. Compound of formula (I) according to claim 1, wherein R₁ is hydrogen or C₁–C₄ alkyl;

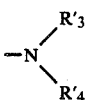
X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁–C₄ alkylene chain;

the symbol =Y represents



or =O;

Z is hydroxy, C₁–C₆ alkoxy or a group



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁–C₄ alkyl;

the symbol = represents a single or double bond, and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

3. Compound of claim 2, wherein

R₁ is C₁–C₄ alkyl;

X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁–C₄ alkylene chain;

=Y is =O; and

Z is C₁–C₆ alkoxy or



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is independently hydrogen or C₁–C₄ alkyl.

4. Compound of claim 3, wherein

R' is methyl or ethyl;

X is —CH—(CH₂)₂—; and

Z is methoxy, ethoxy, —NH₂, —N(CH₃)₂ or —N(C₂H₅)₂.

5. Compound of claim 4, wherein

Z is methoxy, —N(CH₃)₂ or —N(C₂H₅)₂.

6. A compound selected from the group consisting of: 24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-ethyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-dimethyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;

24-N,N-dimethylcarbamoyl-4-ethyl-4-azachol-5-en-3,12-dione;

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-azachol-5-en-12α-hydroxy-3-one;

24-N,N-diethylcarbamoyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5α-cholan-3,12-dione;

24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-chol-5-en-3,12-dione; and

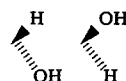
24-methoxycarbonyl-4-methyl-4-aza-5α-cholan-3,12-dione.

7. A compound of formula (I) according to claim 1, wherein

R₁ is —OR₂, wherein R₂ is hydrogen, C₁–C₄ alkyl or a C₂–C₁₂ aliphatic or aromatic carboxylic acyl or a hydroxy protecting group

X is a direct bond or a straight or branched C₁–C₄ alkylene chain;

the symbol =Y represents



or =O;

Z is hydroxy or a group



wherein each of R'₃ and R'₄ is, independently, hydrogen or C₁–C₄ alkyl; and

the symbol = represents a single or double bond, and the pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

8. A 5α-reductase inhibiting pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of a compound of formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, according to claim 1, as the active substance, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and/or diluent.

9. A method of inhibiting 5α-reductase in a patient in need of such inhibition, said method comprising administering to said patient an inhibiting amount of a compound of claim 1.

* * * * *